



Southwestern Idaho News

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

December's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Boise-Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area declined a tenth of a percentage point, returning to October's 2.8 percent in part because the last of the holiday retail hiring wasn't recorded until December. The decrease followed a slight increase in November, which followed three straight months of declining unemployment. December's rate was two-tenths of a percentage point below December 2005's seemingly rock bottom 3 percent. Over 9,000 more people were employed last December than the same month a year earlier.

Despite the monthly drop in the unemployment rate, total nonfarm jobs fell by 100 in December. Goods-producing jobs increased by 100 due to strong manufacturing that countered job losses as cold weather set in on the construction sector. The service sector lost 200 jobs as some seasonal government positions disappeared. Despite the slight decline in nonfarm employment in December, the year-over-year gain in jobs was a robust 5.6 percent, adding 14,700 new jobs in the

	Civilian Labor Force	Number Unem- ployed	Percent Unem- ployed	Number Employed
Ada	197,569	4,906	2.5	192,663
Adams	1,972	162	8.2	1,810
Boise	3,830	117	3.0	3,713
Canyon	82,842	2,943	3.6	79,899
Elmore	10,948	428	3.9	10,520
Gem	7,798	298	3.8	7,499
Owyhee	5,453	80	1.5	5,373
Payette	10,410	496	4.8	9,914
Valley	5,008	222	4.4	4,786
Washington	5,223	250	4.8	4,973
Statewide	761,348	24,733	3.2	736,615

Southwestern Idaho Table 1: Boise City-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment (Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties)

	Dec 2006*	Nov 2006	Dec 2005	% Change Last Month	% Change Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	297,400	299,200	288,600	-0.6	3.0
Unemployment	8,300	8,600	8,600	-3.5	-3.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.8	2.9	3.0		
Total Employment	289,100	290,600	280,000	-0.5	3.3
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	297,800	298,900	290,000	-0.4	2.7
Unemployment	7,900	8,300	7,900	-4.8	0.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.6	2.8	2.7		
Total Employment	289,900	290,600	282,100	-0.2	2.8
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	276,000	276,100	261,300	0.0	5.6
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	55,400	55,300	52,500	0.2	5.5
<i>Natural Resources & Construction</i>	24,100	24,300	22,100	-0.8	9.0
Construction	23,800	24,000	21,700	-0.8	9.7
<i>Manufacturing</i>	31,300	31,000	30,400	1.0	3.0
Durable Goods	24,800	24,500	24,100	1.2	2.9
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,600	2,700	2,300	-3.7	13.0
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	1,600	1,600	1,500	0.0	6.7
Machinery Manufacturing	1,200	1,200	1,200	0.0	0.0
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	14,400	14,200	14,300	1.4	0.7
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,300	2,300	2,200	0.0	4.5
Other Durable Goods	2,700	2,500	2,600	8.0	3.8
Nondurable Goods	6,500	6,500	6,300	0.0	3.2
Food Manufacturing	4,400	4,400	4,400	0.0	0.0
Printing & Related Support Activities	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	1,400	1,400	1,200	0.0	16.7
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	220,600	220,800	208,800	-0.1	5.7
<i>Trade, Transportation, & Utilities</i>	55,400	55,200	51,700	0.4	7.2
Trade	47,500	47,400	44,500	0.2	6.7
Wholesale Trade	12,500	12,500	11,900	0.0	5.0
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	7,400	7,500	7,300	-1.3	1.4
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,600	3,600	3,600	0.0	0.0
Retail Trade	35,000	34,900	32,600	0.3	7.4
Food & Beverage Stores	4,600	4,600	4,600	0.0	0.0
General Merchandise Stores	7,200	7,100	6,900	1.4	4.3
All Other Retail Trade	23,200	23,200	21,100	0.0	10.0
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	7,900	7,800	7,200	1.3	9.7
Utilities	600	600	600	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	7,300	7,200	6,600	1.4	10.6
<i>Information</i>	5,400	5,400	5,500	0.0	-1.8
Telecommunications	1,500	1,500	2,400	0.0	-37.5
<i>Financial Activities</i>	14,900	14,700	13,800	1.4	8.0
Finance & Insurance	10,300	10,300	9,700	0.0	6.2
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4,600	4,400	4,100	4.5	12.2
<i>Professional & Business Services</i>	38,800	39,000	37,400	-0.5	3.7
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	11,300	11,300	11,200	0.0	0.9
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,700	5,800	5,700	-1.7	0.0
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	21,800	21,900	20,500	-0.5	6.3
<i>Educational & Health Services</i>	32,900	32,800	31,600	0.3	4.1
Educational Services	3,300	3,300	2,900	0.0	13.8
Health Care & Social Assistance	29,600	29,500	28,700	0.3	3.1
Hospitals	9,600	9,600	9,200	0.0	4.3
<i>Leisure & Hospitality</i>	23,000	23,200	22,600	-0.9	1.8
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,000	3,100	2,900	-3.2	3.4
Accommodation & Food Services	20,000	20,100	19,700	-0.5	1.5
Accommodation	1,900	2,000	2,100	-5.0	-9.5
Food Services & Drinking Places	18,100	18,100	17,600	0.0	2.8
<i>Other Services</i>	7,200	7,200	6,300	0.0	14.3
<i>Total Government</i>	43,000	43,300	39,900	-0.7	7.8
Federal Government	5,700	5,700	5,700	0.0	0.0
State & Local Government	37,300	37,600	34,200	-0.8	9.1
State Government	13,900	14,000	13,400	-0.7	3.7
State Government Education	4,800	4,900	4,800	-2.0	0.0
State Government Administration	9,100	9,100	8,600	0.0	5.8
Local Government	23,400	23,600	20,800	-0.8	12.5
Local Government Education	15,000	15,000	12,700	0.0	18.1
Local Government Administration	8,400	8,600	8,100	-2.3	3.7

* Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

Boise-Nampa area. The region has exceeded 275,000 jobs for three consecutive months. The December 2006 labor force figures for all 10 counties in southwestern Idaho are shown in Table 2 on page 14.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BOISE METROPOLITAN AREA

- Canadian-based XL Foods Inc. has recently reopened the shuttered Swift meat processing plant in Nampa. During the summer of 2005 Swift closed that facility, and 400 people lost their jobs. News that XL Foods was hiring created a lot of interest from former employees of both Swift and Tyson foods, which also recently closed. XL Foods is using only about a quarter of the facility's capacity, but the company intends to increase to 1,200 the number of cattle processed per day and hire more employees in the near future. Once running at full capacity, the new processing plant will have replaced the jobs lost from the Swift closure and will infuse millions of dollars in payroll as well as additional industrial property taxes into Nampa's economy.
- Sierra Trading Post, primarily a catalog and online retailer of name brand clothing and outdoor gear, recently held its grand opening in Meridian. The 25,000-square-foot Meridian store is the fourth retail location for Sierra Trading Post and is the latest nationally-known retailer to open a store in southwestern Idaho.
- The Micron Technology Foundation has donated \$12.5 million to Boise State University to help cover the costs of building a new home for the school's College of Business and Economics. With increasing enrollments and demand for its programs, Boise State is in an expansion mode in several other colleges, most notably nursing and applied technology.
- The Idaho State Board of Education has granted Boise State University permission to begin the much-publicized football stadium expansion project. The expansion will add luxury suites, a new press box, club seats and loge boxes at a total cost of \$36 million, financed by bonds and money from the athletic department. Boise State expects construction completed in time for the 2008 football season.
- Image National Inc. with a payroll of 100 has completed its relocation from Boise to Nampa. The firm had outgrown its current location and found an existing facility, the former Aluma Glass building, which was more suitable. Image National makes large electrical signs for businesses nationwide and serves customers such as Albertson's and Eddie Bauer.
- The Idaho Nursing Workforce Center at Boise State University has reported that Idaho is 48th in the na-

tion in the number of nurses per capita, underscoring the shortage of nurses statewide and especially in southwestern Idaho due to the rapidly expanding population. One major obstacle in solving the nursing shortage is a lack of instructors because most can make considerably more money working as nurses rather than teaching. The shortage is being addressed through a joint venture between Idaho State University and Boise State University. Starting this fall, Boise State will offer the same master's of nursing degree that Idaho State already offers. Students can take the classes at either school, and even a few online classes will be offered. The universities hope this joint venture will turn out more nursing instructors, who are required to have a master's degree to teach in the nursing programs.

- Nampa's population is now just under 80,000, according to a consulting firm hired by the city fire department assess population for fire protection reasons. At 79,819 people, this represents a 4.5 percent increase from one year ago when Nampa registered 76,343 residents. Over the same time period, the city's labor force grew by 3.2 percent, suggesting larger families and retirees are making up a larger portion of the population increase.
- Another large national retailer is set to open in Nampa at the Treasure Valley Marketplace. Best Buy has scheduled its store opening for March 23. This will be the second store for Best Buy in southwestern Idaho. The new 30,000-square-foot Best Buy will employ 100 people.

ELMORE COUNTY

- Marathon Cheese is now operating with 35 employees slicing and packaging cheese for Tillamook Cheese Co. The Marathon facility has 15 available production lines but is starting out on just five. Marathon has indicated that within the next 12 months it would like to have 100 people on the payroll.
- Mountain Home Auto Ranch recently bought the former Kmart Building and surrounding land near Interstate 84 in Mountain Home. The dealership plans to move in over the next several months, adding up to 12 more employees. Long-term, the Auto Ranch is planning a significant expansion.
- Due to the quickly growing population and number of new businesses in southwestern and south central Idaho, Idaho Power Co. is planning a \$60 million expansion of the Evander Andrews gas turbine power plant. This facility is just northeast of Mountain Home. The expansion, which consists of adding a 170 megawatt turbine to the existing pair of 45 megawatt turbines, is scheduled to come online sometime during 2008.

- The city of Mountain Home was awarded a \$25,000 grant by Capital Matrix, a nonprofit community economic development advocate, for improvements at a city industrial park.
The Mountain Home Rural Fire Protection District also received a \$261,250 grant from the organization. The district plans to use the money for a new fire truck that is expected to cost \$275,000.
- Under the Base Realignment and Closure plan of 2005, the Mountain Home Air Force Base was scheduled to replace its F-16J fighters with F-15Es between 2009 and 2011. Mountain Home will be receiving these aircraft from Elmendorf Air Force Base. The Air Force recently decided to move up the timeline, and the first of the F-15E's has already arrived in Mountain Home with the rest scheduled to be there by fall. Once all the changes in personnel are made, it is estimated that the base will lose approximately 400 people. However, it is possible the base will gain some of those back should the Singapore Royal Air Force be allowed to come to Idaho and train with Mountain Home airmen.

PAYETTE COUNTY

- The city of New Plymouth has received a \$500,000 grant from the Idaho Transportation Department to replace curbs, lights, sidewalks and gutters as well as repave a short stretch of U.S. Highway 30. The city will provide a 10 percent match.

VALLEY COUNTY

- In an effort to find affordable housing for its employees, Tamarack Resort has purchased enough hous-

ing in the Meadows at West Mountain subdivision for more than 275 workers. The housing can accommodate individuals, who do not want to live in dormitory-style units, couples or families. A Tamarack bus shuttles the workers to and from work.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

- Weiser Memorial Hospital recently received a \$50,000 grant from the R.K. Mellon Family Foundation to buy equipment for the laboratory, surgery department, nursing department and the cardio-pulmonary department.
- The city of Cambridge has a new restaurant. Mrs. G's recently opened in a long-vacant location on U.S. Highway 95. The new restaurant has been completely remodeled and has a large room which can be used for meetings or other occasions.

ADAMS COUNTY

- Council Mountain Fabrication has opened in the Council Mountain Business Park. Certified welder Rick Cook offers MEG, TIG and Stick welding. Council's newest business does everything from custom fabrication jobs to equipment repair.

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ATTENTION IDAHO FARM WORKERS

State and federal laws require most farm labor contractors to:

- Register with the state;
- Pay workers at the wages they were promised but never less than \$5.15 an hour;
- Provide written statements of earnings and hours worked;
- Provide worker's compensation coverage;
- Transport employees in vehicles that are properly insured, meet federal and state safety standards and operated by licensed drivers;
- Provide access to sanitary drinking water, bathrooms and facilities for washing hands;
- Make sure any housing that is provided meets federal and state safety and health standards.



Photo by Claudio Beagrie

IDAHO
COMMERCE & LABOR

Wage and Hour Division
317 W. Main St., Boise, ID 83735
Craig Soelberg,
Wage and Hour Supervisor

For a list of licensed farm labor contractors, contact Idaho Commerce & Labor's Wage and Hour Division at 1-800-843-3193 or visit us on the Web at cl.idaho.gov/wh